

Procurement of our contractors for our MIS and EBT Implementation Project continues.

- Quality Assurance – Vermont WIC selected DRC, a New England – based firm with vast experience in IT consultation to government agencies. As the Quality Assurance contractor, DRC will assist in reviewing the work of the MIS and EBT contractors during the simultaneous planning, development and implementation of the two systems, will provide quality analysis of all project deliverables, and provide other support to our state IT professional staff. DRC commenced their work for Vermont WIC in August 2013.
- EBT – Contractor, Vermont, and Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) officials have agreed to the proposed contract language for the EBT Contractor, and that contract is now wending its way through the contract signature process (which, as described in last months' update, can involve as many as 16 different individuals). We expect to have the final signatures gathered and a public announcement of the contractor in late September.
- MIS – Negotiations on contract terms are continuing with the contractor for the transfer and implementation of the Mountain Plains States Consortium (MPSC) MIS.

The statutorily mandated "external review" of our RFP process and contractor selection has been completed, and our project received a very favorable recommendation from the reviewer.

We learned in August that several other state WIC programs are also looking favorably on transferring the MPSC MIS, and most also want to implement online WIC EBT. The MPSC MIS is currently configured only for paper vouchers and offline ("smart card") EBT, and the addition of more states interested in enabling the MIS for online EBT is a positive development for Vermont's plans.

The Readiness Coordinator Network, our cadre of District Office representatives helping to disseminate information about our project, continue to meet every month to learn more about the project, spread the news in their work places, and gather and provide feed-back from WIC staff. A resource page with the news and materials used by the RCN is at:

<http://healthvermont.gov/wic/ReadinessCoordinatorNetwork.aspx>

The votes have been counted, and our contest to name the MIS has delivered a winner: Ceres.

Ceres is a Roman goddess rather appropriate to Vermont and to Vermont WIC. She is the goddess of agriculture and grain, among other signals of fertility. The word "cereal" is derived from her name. (In Latin, "cerealis" is "grain.") The gilded statue on top of Vermont's State House is Ceres. Vermont WIC has asked Gotham City Graphics to develop a graphic accompaniment to the name, for use on project documents, operations guides and training materials.

On the EBT front, we are currently conducting a survey of independent grocers to assess their future IT plans, and gather contact information on their IT consultants and vendors. Vermont WIC will provide a seminar on WIC EBT at the Vermont Grocers Association convention September 27<sup>th</sup> at noon, in the Miller North Mezzanine at the Champlain Valley Fairgrounds.